

AIR DAY

Evening — Exeter This Time :
Select the Display

probably, after this, not appreciated at its full worth by the populace, but it is a long time since we saw flick rolls done by a British pilot—and his were at a couple of hundred feet. Within the meteorological limitations his performance was magnificent. The Magister's aerobatic (and blind-flying) qualities were duly demonstrated, in similarly depressing circumstances, by Flt. Lt. Salter from the C.F.S. These machines, of course, are part of the standard equipment at Straight-operated schools. Flt. Lt. Salter's show was, like Mr. Wikner's, with the Cardiff Club's new Wicko, by way of being a gap-filler.

The Straight-manufactured gas-dragons (or elephants) appear to suffer seriously from excessive gross weight. That at Exeter, like the one at Ipswich, failed to rise properly for the big-game hunter in the Magister, and bowled dismally across the airport surface, on which it was almost safe from the attacker.

In due time the cloud base lifted a trifle, and Mr. Benno de Greeuw climbed into the Symondson Moth for his parachute drop from what looked like 700ft., but we did not enter the height-guessing competition. All went well. Mr. de Greeuw was about the job of "killing" the canopy almost before he had touched. He really does know how to do it.

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Exeter's airport has been in action for more than a year, and both Jersey Airways and Railway Air Services have now used it for a couple of seasons. The official ceremony, performed by Sir Kingsley Wood, can really be considered as applying to the club building (in now familiar Hening and Chitty "expandable" style) which was only finished a month ago.

The Secretary of State for Air was introduced by the Mayor of Exeter, Councillor R. J. Rew, who spoke of the city's special character, with neither industries nor military importance. He gave a brief history of the site. Mr. Whitney Straight spoke of the airport as being an ideal combination of public and private enterprise. He had not been over-optimistic of immediate possibilities in his airport plans, but had had pleasant surprises in recent weeks. One was the institution of the Civil Air Guard, and another



"Flight" photograph.

The crowd in the official enclosure with a background of Gauntlets. The rest of the ten thousand are out of the picture to the right. Some idea of the conditions will be gathered from the fact that the clouds were sometimes touching the low hills seen in the distance.

was the promise of radio and meteorological facilities for Exeter.

Sir Kingsley, who was accompanied on this visit by Sir Francis Shelmerdine, the Director-General of Civil Aviation, reminded his hearers that Exeter was the first city to cut a canal for its shipping, and now, four hundred years later, was making provision for the new form of transport. He said that it was possible for the start of the C.A.G. scheme to be advanced from October 1 to September 1. Already 16,000 applications had been received by the Air Ministry, and they were still coming in. He praised the spirit and faith shown by the Straight Corporation.

He was thanked by the Sheriff of Exeter in a witty speech concerned mainly with the way in which the aerodrome was developed a little at a time ("Buy the land; nothing more. Well, we may as well level some of it—that won't cost much. . . ."), and by Ald. Mansfield, the chairman of the Estates Committee. The words "in spite of opposition" appear with unhappy regularity in the speeches at all such functions.

And, after all that, one must say a word concerning the way in which Sir Kingsley flies to these affairs. Exeter has no radio (yet), and his pilot had to bring the 86 in on a railway line and/or a coastline like everyone else. Perhaps the pilot should have special praise.

THE NEW MOTH MINOR

FOR two years the De Havilland Company has been engaged in the development and flight testing of a new type of light aeroplane for economical training and private ownership, to be called the Moth Minor. The announcement of this new machine was to have been made later in 1938, but, following the Civil Air Guard inauguration it has been decided to explain at once the Company's intentions to produce and market the machine early in 1939.

Some years of investigation of the problems of economical construction and operation has shown conclusively that economy must be achieved through two requirements:

(1) Simplicity in design, the avoidance of the use of special materials, and the adoption of a form of construction which, to the smallest detail parts, is capable of easy manufacture.

(2) The use of a robust and durable structure, which, coupled with a reliable power unit, will ensure ease of upkeep and low maintenance costs. Extreme ease of piloting and safe flying qualities are, of course, imperatively necessary and must be combined with a load capacity and a performance entirely adequate for cross-country travel in all weathers.

These fundamental conclusions, aimed at after considerable experience derived from the design, production and servicing

of thousands of light aircraft during the past fifteen years, led to the decision to build a low-wing monoplane fitted with an engine developed, on smaller and simplified lines, from the Gipsy Major, and giving a maximum output of 90 h.p., so that there is plenty of power for take-off and climb. The company believes that the most sensible compromise has been achieved in the 1939 Moth. For over a year several experimental examples of the Moth Minor have been test-flying almost daily, and both machine and engine have now been systematically evolved to the stage when tooling for production on a necessarily large scale can be started.

The Moth Minor in its simplest form has two open cockpits in tandem and equipped with dual control, and can be flown solo from either cockpit without ballast. For solo flying the front cockpit is normally used because of the good view obtainable. The aeroplane is fully aerobatic with two up. The wings are provided with a simple folding arrangement for housing economy. The machine will also be available as a cabin tourer with a hinged coupé superstructure maintaining adequate headroom and general space with all the comfort of the cabin machine.

More detailed information will be issued in the near future, but it is interesting to learn that the first order has been accepted from the R.A.F. Flying Club.